

Monument Avenue, 1800 Block
Richmond
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1300

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VA,
44-RICH
117-

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MONUMENT AVENUE, 1800 BLOCK

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Location: 1800 block of Monument Avenue, between Allen Avenue and Meadow Street, Richmond, Virginia.

History and Description:

Of twenty-six buildings in the 1800 block, twenty-five are single-family houses; the remaining building is a medical office tower filling the southwest quadrant at Lee Circle. The block was built up quickly, with the first house appearing in 1902, the next in 1904, and eighteen more by 1909. The block was complete by 1914 except for the quadrant lots, which were characteristically developed later. Despite the rapid growth, the buildings exhibit a mix of styles and types. Town houses are accompanied by the evolving freestanding Colonial Revival urban houses, a type new to Richmond. The block represents a search for an appropriate form for the avenue, something that appears private in a public space.

Generally larger lot sizes on the south side accommodate mansions either two or two-and-a-half stories tall, and more likely to have side yards than the houses they face. There are only three town houses on this side of the street; that is, tall, narrow buildings with flat or false mansard roofs, with all stylistic efforts spent on the facade and none on side walls, since only the facade would be visible in what was anticipated to be a close-built street wall. On the other hand, eleven out of thirteen early houses on the north side are of this type. The result is a more urban, integrated character on the north side of the avenue, with a fairly continuous cornice line down the row of houses visually merging separate buildings into a streetwall. The 20' setback and limitation on building materials and bay dimensions prescribed in the original Allen Addition deeds contribute to this effect.

The 1800 block is architecturally rich and dense, including among its dwellings several variations of the Queen Anne, Neoclassical, and Colonial Revival styles, and one especially fine Georgian Revival example. One-story Colonial Revival front porches, most with white classical columns but some with brick or stone pillars, are a significant unifying compositional element down the block, as they are throughout the length of the avenue, along with a generous distribution of balustrades and limestone or brownstone accents on brick facades. These are the primary threads out of which the avenue's signature fabric is knit.

The first structure built on the block was the Queen Anne town house at **1842 Monument Ave.**, finished in 1902 for George E. Guvernator, president of Consumer Ice Company and secretary of Home Brewing Company. It is interesting that although the block is adjacent to the Lee Monument, the house was built fully twelve years after the monument's unveiling, and on the lot farthest from it rather than on one of the quadrant lots immediately addressing Lee Circle. This three-story, gray brick house with brownstone and patterned-brick trim is tall and narrow, and like other examples with side-hall entrances and full bays, its facade was obviously intended to blend into the rhythm of the street wall rather than stand alone. Consequently, the hallway side of the house is on the inside of the block so that living spaces--even an attic--benefit from a window wall facing Meadow Street. The generous use of stained glass in these windows is

distinctive, certainly the largest application of that medium on the avenue. Stepped parapet endwalls, an arch-capped chimney and a false-mansard roof with a sharp front gable and a tent roof with finial crowning a three-sided, three-story bay combine here in a creative interpretation of an otherwise standard Fan District house form. A full-width porch, its roof edged with ornamental metal cresting, is supported by four freestanding and two engaged columns connected by wood balustrades. Only the house's "cream-white" brick, the same used on the Jefferson Hotel in 1895, and the use of bands of brick patterning to define story divisions, relate this building to the house across Meadow Street at 2000 Monument Ave., also completed in 1902.

George Guvernator purchased this lot in November 1901, from E. G. and Thomas B. Higgenbotham, who acquired two adjacent lots at this corner seven months before. Guvernator and his wife, Amelia, built their home the following year but resided there only until 1904, when they sold it for \$11,000 to Virginia Beveridge, wife of Stephen Beveridge, who owned a wholesale grocery business. This was the Beveridge home for more than forty years.

Other residences within the 1800 block that have two- or three-story bays and predate 1907 are Nos. 1824, 1835, and 1840 Monument. All three of these houses have rusticated porches with piers for support and incorporate limestone trim. Nos. 1835 and 1840 Monument are the same house in plan and elevation, varying in small details and in the former's ponderous substitution of rough-cut limestone and brownstone for brick as a facing material. Both have false-mansard roofs with a hipped roof superimposed at the front, arched courses joining a row of windows at the third story, two-story side bays, and balustraded decks atop asymmetrical porches. This porch is repeated at No. 1824, although it joins a three-story instead of a two-story bay. A cornice underscores a balustraded parapet while a band of brick corbelling unites windows on the third floor.

The 1904 town house at 1811 Monument is an example of a Neoclassical turn on the form. Like the residences at Nos. 1810, 1822, 1826, and 1834 Monument, every story is designed as a separate but compatible unit that harmonizes with the overall design. The different treatment of each story divides the facade into three distinct horizontal sections. The first story of No. 1811, for example, is only two bays wide with a cornice to separate it from the next story. The 1925 Sanborn map indicates a full-width one story porch across the facade sheltering the entry; the side entrance was a later alteration. The second story's only fenestration on the front is a centered three-sided oriel; brick quoins at the corners and a corbelled stringcourse above the oriel distinguish it from the one above. Three arched windows are joined across the third story and flanked by recessed panels and brick medallions for a Renaissance effect beneath the modillioned cornice.

Another Neoclassical example at No. 1810 is two bays wide and three stories tall. Broad steps lead to a double-door entry flanked by engaged columns and sidelights, with a rectangular transom over all. The porch's Doric columns support an entablature and upper deck with wrought-iron railing. A rusticated lower story of limestone ashlar anchors the building while stone quoins continue the effect through the second story. Limestone stringcourses, carved in a Greek meander design above the first floor but plain above the second, assist in delineating one story from another. Engaged columns with Scamozzi capitals carry independent and complete entablatures at second-story windows, which open like French doors onto either the porch deck

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or a small balcony with a wrought-iron balcony railing. Transoms above these wide windows open independently, for added ventilation. Windows at the third level are framed by shouldered architraves of cut limestone built up upon the cornices of the second-floor windows over which they are centered. The overall effect is of two stacks of graduated cubes defining three separate registers. The flat roof only enhances a sense of careful geometry. The house has a European character, played up by the very Parisian emphasis on the second floor as primary living space.

The architect of 1810 Monument is unknown, but the original owner was Lucy Hill, whose husband, Julien, was an assistant cashier at the National State and City Bank of Virginia. The Hills lived at 305 W. Franklin before they built this house. William C. Allen's daughter Bettie and her husband, Roger Gregory, sold their five-lot parcel at this end of the street to Thomas F. Jeffress for \$9,000 in 1901. Jeffress sold one lot and part of another the following year to Alice G. Barnes for \$3,150. Alice and her husband, R. L. Barnes, sold the land three years later to J. F. Walsh for \$4,550. The Hills paid \$7,000 for the property on May 31, 1906. They were in residence at their new address by 1908 and lived there the rest of their lives.

The three-story town house at No. 1822, finished in 1906, may have been the inspiration for much of the ornamentation on 1810. The effect of cut-stone classical detailing arrayed upon a smooth limestone veneer is sophisticated, but undercut by the loss of the original balustrade atop the porch. The second and third stories are balanced around a bowed oriel with composite pilasters and engaged columns supporting an exaggerated entablature, but the side-entry arrangement of the rusticated first story does not correspond with the symmetry above.

Other variations on the three-story town house with Neoclassical detailing, a flat roof, and a separation of the facade into horizontal registers are No. 1826, built in 1907, and No. 1834, in 1908. No. 1826 has a two-bay first story, with elliptical fanlights over both entry and front window, but three-bay symmetry above: arched windows and a central French door on the second story, rectangular six-over-one-light windows on the third, with limestone trim throughout. Again, the original balustrade on the porch roof is missing. A two-story half-round bay, pedimented porch, eccentric double window with limestone shouldered architrave over the entry, and limestone cartouches bracketing the third-story windows make 1834 the most eclectic member of this group.

More variations within this group are the two-bay, red-brick house with two-story bay and limestone trim at No. 1828, which employs the common Richmond feature of the triple window; and the town house at No. 1816, with its clear demarcations between stories, gradual diminution of window height from the first to the third story, and an imbalance in the three-bay facade expressing the side-entry plan. The entry has an elliptical fanlight and intricately divided sidelights, a three-sided oriel with diamond-paned windows at the second story, and a triple window at the third. The roof is hipped, but at such a low pitch as to appear flat from the street. There was a balustrade on the roof of the porch.

Double columns across the full-width porch and curvilinear designs in the upper lights of second- and third-story windows distinguish 1832 Monument Ave., but its three-bay facade has the same triple-window emphasis over the entry to the side stair hall. The entry's transom and sidelights are leaded and beveled. This house has the 1800 block's standard limestone jack arches

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over the windows and brick quoins (although these are oddly set in from the actual corners of the building), and is also missing the balustrade over the porch.

No. 1830 **Monument Ave.**, built in 1913 for a wholesale wine and whiskey merchant, is the latest town house on the block. Its facade is two bays wide, with three-sided oriels on the second story and triple windows with jack arches on the third, but its principal embellishments are a fine, bowed columned porch with a Doric entablature that is repeated on a larger scale at the cornice. These emphasize the breadth of the building, and lend it a certain heaviness.

The houses at No. 1812, built by 1905, and 1820 **Monument**, completed by 1906, are the only two pre-1920 houses on the north side of the block that are not three stories tall. These two-and-a-half-story residences have hipped roofs with dormers and asymmetrical entrances. The former is unusual for its keystones with volutes over windows and entry, the spider web design of the fanlight over the entry, and the absence of a prominent porch. The terrace has a wrought-iron balustrade, and there is an odd, diamond-paned bay window on the first floor. The house was first occupied by the family of Louis W. Pizzini, general manager of a piano, organ, and sheet-music sales company.

Garrett B. Wall, real estate agent for and eventually vice president of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, built the house at No. 1820 in 1906. The house originally had balustrades at every level, but the one on the roof has been removed. Paired Doric columns flank the porch stairs at the entry, which has leaded glass sidelights and transom. The cornice below a Palladian dormer has festoons in the frieze. The chain of title begins with Martha Allen and her husband, L. W. Wise, who sold several lots totaling 150' frontage to R. Bruce and Caroline Bowe in 1901. The Bowes, who were involved in real estate development through their business, N. W. Bowe and Son Real Estate and Loans, resided at 1616 W. Grace. After owning the land four years, they sold a parcel of it to Garrett B. Wall in 1905. Wall lived at 302 W. Franklin when he purchased the lot. The Walls built the house and lived there until his death in 1928, when his heirs sold it to Bessie Christian for \$40,000. Christian owned the property for more than twelve years until her death in 1941.

The three-bay town house at No. 1819, completed in 1905, has a similar cornice and frieze below three dormers in a false mansard roof. The middle dormer has a broken segmental pediment. Cast-iron posts--inappropriate replacements for the original columns--support a one-story balustraded porch.

Residences at Nos. 1815, 1825, 1831, 1837, and 1839 **Monument** demonstrate the type of larger-scale domestic architecture generally built on wider lots along the south side of the block. Each house is two-and-a-half stories, constructed of red brick, and has a hipped and/or gabled roof. These five houses were built within a six-year period and have several Colonial Revival features in common, including front porches with columns, cornices, and often balustrades; dormer windows; projecting chimneys; detailed transoms, sidelights, or other door decoration; stone jack arches or keystones; and carefully articulated cornices. Some architects whose careers included significant work on Monument Avenue are represented in this grouping of Colonial Revival houses. Captain M. J. Dimmock designed the house at No. 1839, and D. Wiley Anderson in association with I. T. Skinner, No. 1837. Both were constructed in 1908.

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No. 1831 is one of the earliest and most severe of these houses, and its deed history reveals the incremental way in which even subdivided land could be purchased on Monument Avenue. The house was built for Henry H. George, Sr., a building contractor, sometime between November 1905 and the publication of the 1906 city directory. The house occupies a 50' x 150' lot today, although the land was originally divided to be sold in lots 30' wide. George purchased a lot from Henry and Clara Wallerstein on April 11, 1904, for \$2,700. On the same day he purchased 15' (the western half) of the neighboring lot from Otway S. and Mary M. Allen for \$1,500. These lots formed the site of No. 1831. Other land in the possession of H. H. George at the time of his death was accrued through single purchases involving only 5'- or 10'-wide sections of lots at a time, indicating a desire to sell and buy land of any convenient amount. In 1907, George purchased a garage on parts of two lots directly behind his property for \$900. The house and garage remained in the possession of his heirs until the mid 1950s. As in other instances on the south side of Monument Avenue, the house and garage occupy separate parcels, were sold under separate deeds, and involve different owners. The present owners of No. 1831 acquired the house in 1960 and do not own the garage.

The residence at **1817 Monument** is stylistically unique among houses on the avenue. An eclectic blend of Stick, Shingle, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival elements, this two-and-a-half-story brick house incorporates fewer materials than usually found on houses of this nature. The complex roof of multiple gables with hipped central mass is covered with shingles while an embellished truss elaborates both front and side gables. Fish-scale shingles, a row of glazing, and a rounded cornice occur on the conical roof of the turret. Front gables at the porch and upper half-story are half-timbered but there is little color contrast between materials. Rusticated piers and inner columns at the porch obscure a one-story bay window near the entrance.

Considering the Stick influence upon the style of this house, one might expect it to include more wood exterior elements, especially since the original owner was Bayard H. Ellington, president of Ellington & Guy Lumber Company. Had it been built elsewhere in Richmond, it might look different indeed; however, Allen Addition deed restrictions required that buildings be constructed of brick or stone. In the early 1930s, the Ellingtons defaulted on their mortgage and the bank foreclosed on the property. The house was sold at auction in 1933 for \$10,800.

Another atypical house is **1821 Monument**. Only two bays wide, the house has two pairs of French doors that open onto a front terrace. The tiled and hipped roof with its broad, squat dormer suggests a Prairie influence that distinguishes this brick, two-and-a-half-story house from most other buildings on Monument. It was designed by architect Duncan Lee and built in 1914.

The last buildings constructed on this block were built after 1925 and include Nos. 1800, 1805, and 1808 Monument Ave. The late date of these constructions demonstrates the problem of developing the quadrant lots around the more monumental Lee Circle--perhaps because their cost per frontage foot was three times that of other lots, with less square footage in the lots. Both the red-brick, two-and-a-half-story Georgian Revival houses have hipped roofs with an odd number of dormers, symmetrical facades balanced around a central entry, and louvered shutters at the windows. A fence borders the front of each house.

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The house at **1808 Monument** was designed by I. T. Skinner for Allen heir Martha A. Wise. It was completed in 1925. Upon her death in 1928, Wise's will devised the property to the city of Richmond to be used as a public building and memorial to her parents, but the city declined to accept the gift for zoning reasons and it remained a private residence.

William Lawrence Bottomley designed the Georgian Revival house at **1800 Monument** for Robert M. Jeffress and his wife. Between 1899 and 1901, developer William Payne purchased three lots in this quadrant from Martha Wise, holding them for more than twenty years until the American Trust Company acquired the land through foreclosure in 1922. The Jeffresses purchased the property at auction in 1928 for \$24,000, applied for a building permit the following year, and were in residence in their new home by 1930. Robert Jeffress was president of a paper-manufacturing company and an officer and general manager of King Cotton Mills. The Jeffresses, who moved to Monument from an apartment house at 607 N. Davis Ave., lived at **1800 Monument** for twenty-six years. The symmetry and proportions of this sophisticated design make it one of the finest houses on the avenue. A slate-covered hipped roof, punctuated by three dormers, crowns the five-bay facade. The house is still the only quadrant lot residence to directly address the monumental prospect of its site.

The high-rise office occupying the entire southwest quadrant at Allen and Monument avenues is Lee Medical Building, **1805 Monument**, built in 1950. It represents post-World War II architecture with a classical-commercial flair. Giant order limestone pilasters contrast with red brick to present a modified temple front, complete with rusticated base, an entablature and cornice between the fourth and fifth floors, and the suggestion of a pediment between the window rows of the fifth and sixth floors. Stringcourses, alternating blocks of contrasting lighter material, and a continuation of the cornice unite the principal facade of the building to side wings of the same height. Crossed bars in the metal spandrels above the sixth-floor windows allude to the design of the flag of the Confederacy. This is the only tall building on the block, although the Shenandoah Apartments (1906) and the former Jefferson Club (1909) on Allen Avenue in the block just north of the Lee Monument had already established a high-rise precedent in its vicinity.

Sources of Information:

Richmond City Directories.

Richmond Building Permits: 20516 (1800 Monument), 14573 (1808 Monument), 4638 (1816 Monument), 6363 (1826 Monument), 10376 (1830 Monument), 3031 (1842 Monument), 4822 (1819 Monument), 2708 (1821 Monument), 6948 (1825 Monument), 6851 (1831 Monument), 750 (1837 Monument), 550 (1839 Monument).

Deed books: **1842 Monument**: 171B/58, 172A/332, 182A/166, 453D/31, 633B/94, 724/1667; **1810 Monument**: 170C/466, 174C/281, 189C/272, 553B/197, 554C/82, Will Book 124/157; **1831 Monument**: 170C/329, 176B/94, 180B/425, 180A/381,380, 187B/237, 188A/56, 170C/329, 177A/12, 127B/129, 179C/500, 173B/294, 170C/386,310, 127B/129, 186C/503, 186A/389, 192B/278, 193A/255, 180B/427,425, 186A/389, 562B/2, 566D/321, 599C/149; **1820 Monument**: 170A/383, 184B/480, 354A/264, 430B/23, 431C/304, 430D/456, 456B/52, 501D/190, 564D/111, 606C/419, 668D/672; **1817**

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Monument: 170B/306, 185C/141, Will Book 1/419, 104C/353, 170A/392, 173B/279, 177B/22, 179C/502, 362A/188, 387C/490, 394B/144, 418A/258, 438B/174, 560C/151, 648B/649, 737/1655, 94/797; **1800 Monument:** 133A/222, 175C/271, 171C/378, 165C/260, 279C/319, 354C/138, 555B/68, 599A/694,692, 668B/559, 679D/278.

Richmond City Council Minutes, June 14, 1928.

Project Information:

This documentation of Monument Avenue was undertaken in summer 1991 by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a division of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C., under the general direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief. The project was sponsored by the Monument Avenue Centennial Committee, Millie Jones and Ceci Amrhein, co-chairpersons, and Sylvia Summers, director of development. Funding was provided by the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation, the City of Richmond, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the Historic Richmond Foundation, the F. M. Kirby Foundation, Inc., and the Robert G. Cabell III and Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation.

HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland directed the project and edited this historical report. Kathy Edwards (University of California at Berkeley) was the field supervisor; Esme Howard (Yale University) and Toni Prawl (University of Missouri) were the team historians. Jonathan C. Spodek, AIA, produced architectural drawings and Jack Boucher took the photographs. The team's work resulted in the publication Monument Avenue, of which the report on this one block forms only a small portion. Researchers are referred to that volume for more information.

For more information on 1800 Monument Ave., see HABS No. VA-1259. For more information on 1832 Monument Ave., see HABS No. VA-1323.

ADDENDUM TO:
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